

# Categorizing and Classifying

## ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

**classifying:** assigning items—people, information, ideas, things—to a group based on shared features or attributes, a category

**categorizing:** forming groups of items according to shared traits; determining a set of criteria by which the items can be classified

## HERE'S HOW

**Step 1: Identify the items you want to classify.** You may want to classify foods, animals, sports, movies, novels, or any other material.

**EXAMPLE** Here is a random list of sports.

baseball tennis climbing racquetball football volleyball  
basketball soccer swimming running weight-lifting squash

**Step 2: Select a typical item and think about its features.** Then identify other items in the group that share features similar to it.

**EXAMPLE** Tennis, squash, and racquetball are similar in a number of ways.

**Step 3: Generate a rule (a set of criteria) for the group.** Ask yourself:

- What do the objects, ideas, or facts have in common?
- What qualities or attributes unite the items in each group?

**EXAMPLE** Tennis, squash, and racquetball are individual sports in which one person plays against another person using a racquet.

Therefore, one category will be labeled *Individual Racquet Sports*.

**Step 4: Continue until all items are classified and each category has a set of criteria to describe it.**

**EXAMPLE** Basketball, soccer, baseball, football, and volleyball are similar in that they are team sports played with a ball.

Individual Racquet Sports	Team Sports Played with a Ball	Non-Ball / Non-Racquet Sports
Tennis	basketball	climbing
squash	soccer	running
racquetball	baseball	weight-lifting
	football	swimming
	volleyball	